

Remarks:

The Office Action mailed June 29, 2006 has been received and reviewed. By the present Response and Amendment, Applicant has (i) amended Claims 33 and 43, and (ii) canceled Claims 1-27, 29-32, 34-42, and 44-49, without prejudice. Claim 28 had been previously canceled, without prejudice, in the Response and Amendment dated April 13, 2006. No new matter has been introduced by virtue of the amendments to Claims 33 and 43.

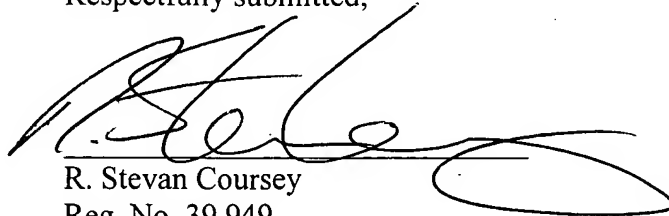
First, the Office Action variously rejected Claims 1-32, 34-42, and 44-49 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, 35 U.S.C. §102(e), and 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Responsive thereto, Applicants have canceled Claims 1-32, 34-42, and 44-49, without prejudice, thereby reserving Applicants' right to pursue the subject matter of these canceled claims in the future, in the present or another patent application. Applicants submit that by canceling Claims 1-32, 34-42, and 44-49, without prejudice, the Office Action's rejections of these claims are now rendered moot.

Second, the Office Action objected to Claims 33 and 43 "as being dependent upon a rejected base claim" and stated that Claims 33 and 43 "would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims." In response, Applicants have amended Claims 33 and 43 in rewriting them in independent form to include all of the limitations of the underlying respective base Claims 29 and 39. There were no intervening claims. Applicants contend that now rewritten Claims 33 and 43 are in condition for allowance.

Conclusion:

In view of the amendments submitted herein and the above remarks, it is believed that the present patent application has been placed in condition for allowance. Thus, Applicants earnestly solicit favorable action. In the event that the Examiner has any questions or requires additional information pertaining to the present patent application, the Examiner is urged to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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